

Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Deputy Administrator for Marketing Programs
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Processed Products Branch
Area Office
GS-0326-5, Office Automation Assistant

SJ FV57
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I. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in an Area Office of the Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs. The Area Office is responsible for carrying out inspection and grading programs for processed fruits and vegetables and miscellaneous assigned commodities for a designated geographical area.

The employee serves as an Office Automation Assistant responsible for directing and/or performing a wide variety of administrative support duties for the area office.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reviews rough draft of various types of inspection certificates to verify completeness of information such as address of applicant, volume of product and other pertinent information to be included in the official certificate. Using a micro-computer software program, prepares and types certificates from rough draft (from grader worksheets and associated documents) adding missing information and correcting inconsistencies, errors and omissions based on information from the files or contact with the grader/inspector. Assures completeness of certificates, accuracy of certificate format, as well as spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Review accounts receivable status printouts, detail transaction report and various other reports from NFC for discrepancies, errors, or omissions.

Identifies delinquent accounts using information from NFC. As directed by the Administrative Support Assistant, makes phone calls and writes letters to companies.

Receives reports of hours worked from inspectors in charge of plants under contract, reconciles time sheets as necessary and inputs/posts information, as appropriate, into electronic data base system or handwritten ledger. On the basis of these reports, apportions charges for inspectors, including those who work at multiple locations within the pay period.

Compiles data for miscellaneous reports covering commodities inspected.

Maintains statistics for and types reports covering training, mileage, assignment of employees, intermittent employment limitations, reports of cancellation or failure to renew contracts, etc.

Participates in operating the Plant Information Systems (PLIS) database by inputting and maintaining data, and preparing required reports. Prepares routine contacts by assuring accuracy and completeness of all data/information.

Performs a variety of general office clerical support functions including receiving and reviewing Time and Attendance reports to determine if entries are appropriate and complete and inputs data into data base system for transmission to NFC; ensures that all time is properly charged by accounting codes. Reviews leave discrepancy listings and prepares leave audits as needed. receiving, reviewing and distributing incoming mail; receiving telephone calls and greeting office visitors; responding to/answering non-technical questions on own initiative and referring technical matters/ inquiries to appropriate source; and, taking telephone requests for inspection services by obtaining required information such as nature of the request, location, and number of inspection personnel requested.

Checks with proper officials regarding non-receipt of checks. Processes documentation for reimbursable overtime.

Establishes and maintains copies of directives, program issuances, file codes, etc., and distributes same to appropriate personnel; takes annual mail and telephone surveys and assists in space surveys for the office; maintains adequate supplies of program and administrative forms and internal office supplies, and prepares requisitions for supplies and equipment, as necessary.

Establishes and maintains an extensive office filing system for program-related and administrative documents, papers, reports, etc.

Composes routine correspondence including memos to inspectors and replies to inquiries from the general public.

Obtains information on services for the repair and servicing of equipment.

Maintains inventory and accountability records of all area office property. Distributes accountable items such as certificates, file codes, stamps, etc.

Provides assistance to inspectors by answering questions on administrative matters, such as time and leave records, travel regulations, per diem, and other administrative questions that arise; or refer to the appropriate personnel. Assembles and reviews pre-employment forms upon completion.

Reviews and types travel vouchers for area office personnel.

Assists in preparation of workers' compensation forms.

Utilizing a micro-computer for word processing, program-specific software and related functions, types correspondence, reports, plant surveys, contracts, certificates, and other materials as the

workload requires, from handwritten documents, papers or drafts. Assures accurate format, grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.

Adheres to Equal Employment and Civil Rights policies, goals and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that oral and written communications are bias-free and differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Familiarity with the organization of the Processed Products Branch as well as knowledge of the assignments of each Area Office employee.

Knowledge of USDA, NFC, AMS, MRP and Branch procedures to maintain user-fee ledgers, prepare reports based on these accounting documents, and collect on past due accounts.

Knowledge of the Processed Products Branch grading and inspection program mission, functions, and objectives as they apply and relate to the financial assistance and general clerical activities of the area office.

Ability to establish rapport and conduct oneself in a tactful and diplomatic manner with vendors and program officials at all levels.

Thorough knowledge of office clerical procedures in order to prepare certificates, record requests for inspection, maintain and requisition supplies, maintain files, route mail and telephone calls, etc.

Skill in maintaining figures and compiling data for a variety of administrative reports.

Knowledge of travel and time and attendance regulations.

Knowledge of grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation sufficient to prepare correspondence, reports, etc.

Skill in utilizing a micro-computer for word processing, program-specific software, electronic mail and other applications; skill in operating an adding machine/calculator, and an electric typewriter. A qualified typist is required.

Familiarity with procedures used to prepare personnel forms and ability to answer questions regarding same or other administrative matters, including T&As and travel.

2. Supervisory Controls

The incumbent is under the general supervision of the Administrative Support Assistant and receives work assignments and technical direction from the Administrative Support Assistant in the office. Employee works independently to plan and carry out steps for completing assignments in accordance with official instructions and practices. When deviations in an assignment cause problems, the employee uses his/her own initiative to resolve them and coordinate the efforts with the supervisor. The employee refers questions on unusual/new situations to the supervisor after attempting resolution of the matter independently. Completed work is checked for adherence to instructions and overall accuracy and sufficiency.

3. Guidelines

Guidelines include a variety of administrative and program-specific manuals, directives, instructions, regulations, etc., of the Branch, Program, Agency, and NFC. These guidelines include, but are not limited to, instructions on computing charges to applicants, collections, monthly reports, training reports, as well as time and attendance procedures. Employee uses judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines and references and in making minor deviations to adapt the guidelines to specific cases. Employee determines which alternatives to use. Situations to which existing guidelines cannot be applied are referred to the supervisor. The incumbent is required to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines and making minor deviations to adapt them to specific cases.

4. Complexity

The incumbent must have the ability to adapt to changes in work processes. The nature of the work will necessitate having the flexibility to perform functions in the absence of the supervisor. Incumbent is expected to proof documents/reports and identify/correct errors or missing information or raise questions.

The incumbent performs clerical and general office support functions related to the inspection work and administrative activities of the office. Preparing certificates requires knowledge of complicated and extensive formats and must be accurate and error free, since they document the official grading determinations.

Typing duties consist of duties that involve related clerical steps and the incumbent must recognize the propriety of format, the need for certain routing arrangements and comparable established requirements.

Clerical duties involve procedural as well as substantive steps. The incumbent must understand the contents of materials processed in order to process administrative documents and maintain a variety of files.

The incumbent must be familiar with a wide variety of subjects including but not limited to personnel, procurement, billing procedures, marketing orders, and Branch accounting procedures.

The incumbent should be alert to changes in regulations and procedures and make adjustments accordingly.

5. Scope and Effect

The incumbent is expected to identify and correct errors in documents and records, follow up on delinquent accounts, prepare reports, and reconcile discrepancies in automated accounting reports.

The purpose of the work is to collect, organize and provide information in oral and written form in accordance with established procedures and to contribute to the effectiveness of the inspection work of the graders assigned to the office.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts include Area Office employees and representatives of private companies, state government and Federal government personnel and other governmental agencies using grading services. Contacts may also include regional, Branch and headquarters personnel.

7. Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are for the purpose of receiving instruction, exchanging information about administrative matters of the office, providing information to potential applicants regarding the service available, obtaining information about the products to be graded, resolving work related problems, provide needed reports and answer questions.

8. Physical Demands

The work is sedentary; however, the employee may be required to walk, stand, bend, stoop and carry relatively light items such as books and files.

9. Work Environment

The work is performed in a typical office setting requiring the use of normal safety precautions necessary for an office environment.